



EDWARD BROOKS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Testimony - Assembly Bill 128 Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs April 15, 2009

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 128 today.

Assembly Bill 128 is a proposal that my predecessor drafted last session at the request of the Juneau County Sheriff, Brent Oleson to authorize a sheriff to depute certain security officers who are employed by the Department of Military Affairs. AB 128 will increase security at Volk Field. In January I went to Volk Field along with Sheriff Oleson to tour and to see for myself just where the need is and what brought about this proposal. I agreed to re-draft this bill in response to the needs expressed by Sheriff Oleson and Volk Field personnel.

Volk Field is located in rural Juneau County and is under a split jurisdiction – state and federal. The base covers a vast area of the county and is used for a variety of training purposes with an emphasis on pilot training. It also serves as the place of deployment for thousands of our troops, as well as storage location for considerable military property giving it a high risk status for protection.

AB 128 is a bill that will allow for increased security at Volk Field. Currently, military personnel may patrol the interior of the base perimeter; however they are not allowed to patrol the exterior of the fence. AB 128 will authorize jurisdiction to the sheriff to deputize the military personnel so they may leave the base and patrol outside the fence if a need arises. The property surrounding the base is privately owned and not easily accessible. If an incident occurs on the back side of the base and military personnel have observed an incident from their inside location where they regularly patrol, then AB 128 would authorized them to go outside the fence at that location or a nearby location to confront perpetrators immediately. The sheriff's department is not currently as accessible to handle the situation in those remotes areas surrounding the base.

Military flights to and from the base pass over the area bluffs and rural country side and if an incident were to occur the assistance of the military personnel deputized to leave the base and assist local law enforcement is important to better provide security and emergency assistance.

Assembly Bill 128 is win-win proposal that will provide better security for our troops and will assist local law enforcement in better patrolling the perimeter of the base.

Sheriff Oleson was not able to be here in person to testify but we have connected him by conference call for the purpose of hearing from his standpoint just how important this bill is to law enforcement in Juneau County. Thank you for putting together the conference call to allow the sheriff to be here in some capacity today.

Thank you again for hearing AB 128. I hope that you will take executive action on this proposal today or soon so that we may provide this additional security measure for our troops using Volk Field. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

August 25, 2009

Representative Steve Hilgenberg
Chairman, Assembly Committee on
Veterans and Military Affairs
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53708

Dear Chairman Hilgenberg:

Thank you for scheduling an executive session of the Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs to take up Assembly Bill 128, which authorizes DMA personnel to be deputized for the purpose of providing security around certain Wisconsin military facilities. As the Senate author of the bill, I feel it is an important measure to strengthen our ability to keep Volk Field Air National Guard Base and similar facilities secure.

As you know, Representative Brooks intends to introduce an amendment to the bill that clarifies what duties deputized personnel may perform and where they may patrol. The language of this amendment is the result of an agreement among the Wisconsin National Guard, AFSCME, and the Juneau County Sheriff's Department; I have been kept informed of the negotiations among these stakeholders as they developed. I believe the amendment is fully consistent with the intent of the legislation, while adequately addressing the concerns of DMA employees that this authority be restricted to providing security for military bases.

Therefore, I ask you and the members of the committee to support Representative Brooks' amendment, and to recommend passage of Assembly Bill 128. Please share this letter with the members of the committee.

Thank you again for taking up this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie".

JULIE LASSA
State Senator
24th Senate District



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

Assembly Bill 128 Testimony
Assembly Committee on Veteran and Military Affairs
April 15, 2009
Room 415 Northwest

Chairman Hilgenberg and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Assembly Bill 128, of which I am proud to be Senate lead sponsor.

As my colleague just testified, this bill corrects a potentially serious lapse of security at one of Wisconsin's most important military installations, the Volk Field National Guard Airbase. The combination of the split jurisdiction between state and federal lands, and the difficult-to-patrol terrain surrounding the field, result in a situation in which the area around this installation is at risk of being insufficiently guarded. The Juneau County Sheriff's Department has neither the manpower, the equipment, or the training to defend the perimeter of this facility. And the federal military personnel at the compound cannot bring loaded weapons outside the gate.

While most of us pay little thought to the security of Wisconsin's military facilities, the recent incident in which fighter planes chased a hijacked aircraft through Wisconsin airspace should serve to remind us that we can't afford to relax our vigilance. Volk Field is the home of the Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center, one of only four in the nation dedicated to honing the skills of the Guard's combat pilots. In addition, the 128th Air Control Squadron is stationed there, comprised of command and control and intelligence personnel who provide aerospace battle management support. To provide anything less than optimal security for this facility is to invite a breach that could have potentially disastrous consequences for our state and our nation. Similar situations also exist at Truax Field in Madison and Mitchell Field in Milwaukee.

Fortunately, we have a simple and cost-effective fix in AB 128. By permitting sheriffs and undersheriffs, with the approval of the state adjutant general, to deputize security officers of the Department of Military Affairs, trained, well-

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equipped personnel will be able to patrol the perimeter of Volk and other airfields with federal/state jurisdiction conflicts. This policy change will not only permit tighter security around Volk Field, it will also permit the Sheriff's Department to focus its efforts on patrolling the nearby residential areas and provide a greater degree of safety to residents living there. The DMA supports this bill, because it realizes that security at these fields is of the utmost importance, and its responsibility to provide that security must extend beyond the perimeter fence.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 128, and I hope that it will move forward without delay.